

LAKESIDE
20 North Main Street
Yardley
Bucks County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-5496

HABS
PA
9-YARD,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

LAKESIDE

HABS NO. PA-5496

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PA,
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4-

Location: 20 North Main Street, Yardley, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: Mr. & Mrs. John Moxon (also current occupants)

Present Use: Private residence

Significance: Lakeside is one of the earliest homes in the area. Located on the edge of the town of Yardley, the completed house predates the platting of the town by almost eighty years. The house was part of the Yardley family's grist mill property, and thus was the homestead of the town's founding family. Lakeside is also significant architecturally as an example of an earlier, stone residence executed in the Georgian style.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: 1728. The main block of the house has a date stone towards the front of the southeast side elevation which reads "W Y 1728." However, it is believed that the 1728 residence was added to the front of an earlier log residence which is incorporated into the current rear wing. The glazed porch or conservatory has scratched into the glass the inscription "LYW 1869." It was probably at this time that changes were made to the interior detailing as well.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The property on which the house sits was part of a 519 acre tract of land purchased by William Yeardley (later spelled Yardley) from William Penn for 10 pounds sterling in 1682. It was obtained by William Yardley's nephew, Thomas Yardley in 1702. From Thomas it passed onto his heir, Thomas II; from him to Courtland Yardley, onto his brother, William and eventually onto Susan J. Yardley, the wife of Algernon S. Cadwallader. It was purchased in recent years by the current owners, Mr. & Mrs. John Moxon (and family).
3. Builder: The initials in the date stone, W Y, indicate that the house was built by/for William Yardley.
4. Original plans and construction: It is possible that the original house is incorporated into what is now the rear wing of the house. Local legend has it that John Brock's log house was enclosed in the current building and that the main block was added to the front. This original section was probably a single room with a large fireplace for cooking and a boxed winder stairway. The main house probably consisted of a center hall with parlors to either side in the front, with a stair hall behind the west room and a smaller chamber behind the east room.
5. Alterations and additions: The glazed porch or conservatory was added to the southeast side elevation, entered from the front south parlor in 1869 (according to the inscription in the glass). It was probably at this time, or shortly thereafter, that some remodeling occurred in this room. Corbelled fireplace supports in the basement indicated there were originally corner fireplaces. Thus, a wall between the front parlor

and smaller rear chamber was removed along with a corner fireplace in each room, and the freestanding fireplace with archways between what is now the living room and an open library was added. New, Victorian era mantels were also added here and in the west front room, the current dining room. Also, symmetrically molded trim with bull's eye corner blocks now surrounds the doorways and windows. Cornice molding was also added. In the rear wing, which probably predates the main block, the boxed stairway was removed. A modern kitchen has since been added to the rear of this section, and a former porch area at its southeast elevation has been enclosed.

B. Historical Context:

In July of 1682 William Yeardley (later spelled Yardley) came to Pennsylvania from England with his wife, three sons and a servant. A Quaker minister, Yardley and his family came to America seeking religious freedom. Upon his arrival he purchased of William Penn, a 519 acre tract for the sum of 10 pound sterling upon which he erected a dwelling. They were here twenty years when a small pox epidemic struck, taking the lives of the entire family.

The property was passed onto William's nephew, Thomas Yardley who came from England to make his claim. Due to the fear of spreading small pox, William Yardley's house was burned. Thomas evidently erected his own house and prospered here. By 1710 he had established the first ferry service across the Delaware here, known as "Yardley's Ferry." The area was little more than a scattering of farmsteads at that time. It would be some time yet before the platting of the town in 1807. In 1728 Thomas was able to erect a large home in the Georgian style of the period. A few years later, in 1832 he purchased the adjoining mill established some years prior by John Brock. Thomas expanded and improved the then existing mill which was later rebuilt by his son, also named Thomas, in 1769. The house remained in the Yardley family for many years, passing from Thomas Yardley to his son, Thomas II; to Courtland Yardley, to his brother, William VIII and then to Susan J. Yardley. Susan married Algernon S. Cadwallader and thus the property passed on into that family by the 1870's.

In the meantime, the town--known first as Yardleyville--was platted in 1807, and several lots laid out for development along the main street. Growth was spurred by the completion of the Bristol-New Hope Canal which brought added commerce through the town. Later, the Reading Railroad would pass through Yardleyville beginning in 1876. The name was shortened to Yardley in 1883 with the establishment of the Post Office. The Yardley Mill continued its operations on the edge of town well into the 20th century, finally closing 1926.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The current house is a blending of early Georgian design with later elements of Victorian era styling. As typical of many of the historic residences of this region, the house probably incorporates a simpler, settlement era dwelling house (although investigation would be required to substantiate this). Its size and level of detail make the house one of the more substantial of the period, obviously

the residence of persons of means.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in good, well maintained condition. Changes have been made to the original house (as outlined).

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The current house has a two-and-a-half story, three-bay-by-two-bay, rectangular main block with a two-and-a-half story, two-bay-wide ell to the west side of the rear elevation. A modern two story kitchen addition has been made to this ell.

2. Foundations: The foundations are of random stone.

3. Walls: The walls are of random stone covered with plaster. The mortar joints are raised, an indication that repointing was undertaken.

4. Structural systems, framing: The house is of load-bearing masonry construction. Hewn timber framing is visible in the basement, with bridging added for support.

5. Porches: A porch, supported by four Doric columns with a panelled frieze covers the bays of the front (south) facade. A Large side porch, along the rear ell, has been enclosed as a sun room. A conservatory was added to the east side of the main block, off the parlor, in 1869.

6. Chimneys: The house has two interior brick chimneys along the roof ridge of the main block. There is also a brick chimney to the rear of the ell.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entry is to the center of the south facade and has an arched frontispiece with a semi-circular fanlight, pilasters, and panelled reveals.

b. Windows: The typical window is a six-over-six-light sash with narrow muntins and louvered shutters. A modern bay window has been added to the west side of the ell.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The main block appears to have a steeply pitched gable roof (there is a flat section along the ridge) with stepped gable ends. It is covered with wood shingles.

b. Cornices: There is a narrow boxed cornice, with evidence of a former pent.

c. Dormers: There are three elliptically arched dormers along the front of the main block, ornamented with pilasters and bull's eye corner blocks.

C. Site:

1. Historic landscape design: The house sits on a large lot on the outskirts of the town of Yardley. It overlooks a small lake, located on the other side of the roadway and not on the property. To the rear of the house are a number of outbuildings and a modern swimming pool.

2. Outbuildings: The property has a number of outbuildings. The largest is a former barn which now serves as a garage with a tenant apartment above. It is a board-and-batten building on a stone foundation with a gable roof with a decorative front gable. Located behind the house (attached by a breezeway) is a large stone smoke house. There is also a rectangularly shaped, frame wood house with a saltbox roof ornamented by barge boards, and a banked, frame implement shed with a gable front roof.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Interview with current owners, Mr. and Mrs. John Moxon, with author, along with on site investigation, June 1989.

Taylor, Susan and Jerry Taylor. "Yardley Walking Tour."
Yardley, Pa.: Yardley Historical Association, date unknown.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of Lakeside was undertaken as part of a cooperative project between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert J. Kapsch, chief and the Bucks County Conservancy, and funded by Congressional appropriation through the efforts of Congressman, Peter H. Kostmayer. Site selection was made by committee through the Bucks County Conservancy, Jeffrey Marshall, director, who also provided access to his research and information on file with the conservancy. The large-format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer, Jack E. Boucher. The historical report was prepared by HABS historian, Catherine C. Lavoie who accompanied the photographer into the field for on site investigation and architectural description.